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American Art Journal.

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RE-BUILDING OF THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

The brisk gale which brought us torrents of rain on Sunday night, brought, also, comforting assurance to the public that a probable danger was past, for the back wall of the Academy of Music crumbled to pieces before the force of the wind, and not one brick was left standing upon the other. This will surely necessitate the pulling down of the side walls, which were generally considered, or rather felt, by the public to be unsafe, and the resuscitation of the Academy with the old walls left standing, would have engendered a ceaseless feeling of insecurity and distrust in the minds of every visitor to the opera. On the Saturday previous, Mr. Kingsland was notified by the proper official that seventy-five feet of the Fourteenth street wall must be torn down, as it was considered to be unsafe. This precautionary order was justified within the period of twenty-four hours by the falling of the rear wall, which gave evidence of its real weakness.

The result of this accident and this order will again change the managerial programme, by the delay in rebuilding the Academy, which must necessarily ensue. If the old walls could have been used, the Academy could have been ready for occupation by the first of November. But now, supposing the utmost diligence is used, the operation of raising vast walls is so tedious that the earliest moment to be counted on for the completion of the opera house, is the first week of February, 1867. This will deprive Maretzek's fine company of an appearance in New York for nearly five months. How that enterprising manager will fill up this period, outside of New York, we are at a

loss to imagine, for this city is the permanent harvest, and all other places are subsidiary and uncertain granaries for supplies. New York cannot afford to be left without an opera for so long a time, for it affords to a large and influential class its only means of public amusement, and cannot therefore be dispensed with.

Mr. A. T. Stewart has it in his power to afford a temporary location for our operatic company. The Theatre recently known as Lucy Rushton's, could be extended and altered in three months, to such an extent as to afford sufficient accommodation for operatic purposes, and also for the New York Philharmonic Society, which is, like the dove on the waters of Ararat, lacking a resting place. The cost would not be very great, and as such a building is really needed, exclusive of Italian opera, both for English opera and for star engagements, the speculation would not only prove a paying one, but would be a generous and graceful act of accommodation to the public. The prestige which its occupation by the Italian opera would give to the building, would establish its reputation at once, and double the value of the property. The opera is the pet amusement of the fashionable world; it is the one subject which sustains the small talk of the salons, affording a fruitful and endless theme for criticism and discussion, representing the light artillery which keeps up a continual discharge of conversation, giving spice to what else might flag to dullness. Besides this, it gives an extraordinary impulse to certain branches of trade, in which hundreds of persons are employed, and distributes, with liberal hand, the superfluity of wealth, which would otherwise be locked up, having no other channel of circulation.

This suggestion is well worthy of consideration for many reasons. First, because it is a great public want, and should be provided for; secondly, because it can be easily accomplished and at comparatively little cost; thirdly, because it is an enterprise which will pay well; fourthly, because, in addition to an Italian Opera House, we need a permanent American Opera House, where works in our own language can be constantly heard, and where our American composers can have some chance of having their works produced. An American Opera House will assuredly become an established fact in the city, before very long. The progress of musical thought in this country, displaying as it does native talent of a high order, which, in its works, will probably be excluded from the repertoire of Italian opera here, as in other countries, imperatively demands it, and the sooner some steps are taken in that direction, the better it will be for the cause of true art, and the development of our home genius.

For these reasons we urge the consideration of our suggestion, which is in the direct line

with the public wish, and the public's necessity.

ENGLISH OPERA—FRENCH THEATRE.

On Wednesday night, the 13th inst., Balfe's opera, "The Rose of Castile," was produced by the English Opera Company to a large and fashionable audience. The plot is feeble and improbable, and is not very interesting because of its improbability. The music must be characterized as flimsy, patchy, and not earnest. There is not one serious passage in it, although the action deals with foul plots and treasons. The music is chiefly sustained by orchestral figures, into which the words are embroidered with but very little ceremony or regard as to the elocution or accent. There are two or three ballads which are melodious and well-made and are quite effective, being the popular numbers in the opera. The real want of this music is spontaneity; the author has, in a great degree, written out his special vein; the ideas do not flow as freely as usual, and when they are caught, he does not seem to be able to retain them, but wanders off into inconsequent modulations, with the sole view, apparently, of getting out of one key, to return to it again, in the same inconsequent manner. There are some pieces which are characteristic, clever and spirited. The first chorus has a national ring to it, and the duet which succeeds, exhibits some clever counterpoint, and was well sung by Miss Richings and Miss Zelda Harrison. The subject of the Muleteer's song, for orchestra is good, to which the vocal accompaniment is by no means pleasantly arranged. The tenor ballad, "Couldst Thou, dear Maid," commences with a very charming, quaint old theme, a really beautiful thought, but it is only half carried out, and a modern ending gives it an unexpected and not fortunate close. The duet for soprano and tenor is flimsy in the beginning, and intensifies in flimsiness with every measure. The trio for tenor and two bases is a curiously composed work, but its rhythm is effective. It was well sung by Messrs. Wylie, Campbell and Seguin. The quartette, "In every Feature like the Queen," is one of the cleverest compositions in the opera. It is well constructed, dramatic, and is well adapted to the words. The movement at the words "If she thinks to outbrave me" is exceedingly charming, and only fails in its exaggerated close. The following aria for Soprano is brilliant and characteristic. The finale to the first act is very weak indeed, the movement "Farewell bright dream" being a painful example of overstrained modulation.

The opening chorus to the second act is, to say the least, curious, while the following bass solo presents a most inauspicious wedding of music to words. Don Pedro's ballad "Though fortune darkly" is pleasant in form and sweet in melody, and was very effectively sung by Mr. Campbell, winning the honor of an encore. Elvira's ballad "The Convent Cell" is quietly and simply beautiful, and is certainly the melodious gem of the opera, and was very sweetly sung by Miss Richings. The duo for

Soprano and Tenor, is clever and quaint in its construction, and contains a very sweet but superficial tenor solo. The bass buffo duet is a very weak affair—a sort of washed-out Italian re-hash, but the aria for Soprano which follows is an effective and dramatic composition, to which Miss Richings did full credit (excepting a harsh and inharmonious cadenza and three dreadful shakes), and won a hearty encore. The finale is the most effective ensemble piece in the opera, and the movement commencing, "By this marriage I gain," is really excellent.

The performance, vocally, was in some respects very good. Mr. Castle sang with great dash and spirit throughout. He is winning his way upward very fast. Mr. Campbell also sang gracefully, and smoothly. We hope to see him throw more animation into his manner, in subsequent performances. Mr. Seguin was good throughout, and Messrs. Wylie and Penke were painstaking and acceptable.

Miss Caroline Richings sang her music generally with spirit and effect, and threw great dramatic energy into both singing and acting. We should, however, advise her to omit the scherzo in the first scene. It is one tissue of roulades and passages of velocity, none of which did Miss Richings accomplish. Her execution was irredeemably bad, her intervals and her intonation were both false, her shakes had no definite pitch, and in fact, the whole movement was very badly sung indeed. For her reputation's sake we advise her to omit this scherzo. Miss Zelda Harrison sang pleasingly. She is improving in stage ease and manner. The orchestra was very thin and lacked in delicacy and refinement and color. Its performance did but little credit to the judgment or skill of the leader.

"The Rose of Castile" is put upon the stage in the most inexpensive manner. The grand Court Festival at the French Theatre consists of six ladies standing bolt upright against a wall, while another dances fantastically with her back toward them. Elvira had been invited to stay and witness the Festival, but she very wisely refused. Her taste was unimpeachable. This was the old style of bringing out English opera, which brought upon every enterprise of the class a well-merited contempt. If the present management has not facilities for giving operas with the necessary scenic effect, it should choose such operas as can be produced in a proper manner; otherwise the end is not doubtful. We desire to encourage the enterprise, but we must insist, for the sake of the cause, upon proper attention being paid to every department. The public will patronize efforts in the right direction, but it will not recognize such productions as that on Wednesday evening.

GEORGE STECK & CO.'S NEW PIANO ROOMS.

The firm of Steck & Co. have removed from the old store in Walker street, to spacious and beautiful warerooms, No. 141 Eighth street, two or three doors east of Broadway. The main room is an elegant hall of considerable

dimensions, the walls and ceilings elegantly frescoed and lighted by cluster lamps around the column. It is one of the most beautiful and commodious piano warerooms in the city; its acoustic properties are excellent, and it is in every way admirably calculated to display the instruments to the best advantage, both as regards quality of tone and appearance. The change of location, affording as it does such increased and elegant advantages, cannot but give a great impulse to their rapidly increasing business.

Messrs. Steck & Co. issued invitations to a select number of the press, the profession, and prominent individuals, for a private view of their new Piano Hall, on Saturday evening last. The meeting was a very pleasant gathering of talent and intelligence, for an occasion interesting to all, and the harmony desired was found and remained undisturbed. The celebrated pianists attached to the various piano establishments had very particular engagements that evening, which interfered with their promise to be present, so they did not appear; therefore the reputation of their employers was not endangered. But the very fine instruments of Steck & Co. did not go undeveloped. Mr. Joseph Poznanski happening to be present, with the courtesy and kindness of a true artist and gentleman, stepped into the breach, and played many pieces with brilliance, power, and with exquisitely refined taste. His repertoire is extensive, and it was pleasant to hear something good, but out of the stereotyped show solos so much in vogue. His performances were received with much enthusiasm, and elicited significant remarks from certain parties who, from the first appearance of Poznanski in New York, had systematically and grossly abused him, denying him every requisite as a pianist, to the effect that "he played splendidly," and that "it was the first time that said party had heard him play!" Oh, the reliability of New York criticism! Oh, the Spartan integrity of the New York press!

Steck & Co. make very fine pianos; their squares are admirable instruments, and their grand pianos surprised and delighted us. They are first class instruments in every respect; they have the grand tone, in quality, sonorous, rich, brilliant and sympathetic, and their touch is light, elastic and powerful. Such instruments as these stamp the makers as first class.

During the evening the guests partook of a very elegant and bountiful supper, and many speeches were made, which would for many reasons be worth transcribing, but no shorthand writer being present, the golden words of truth and wisdom then uttered have, we fear, passed away forever. After supper a brief requiem was sung over a departed member, and the musical exercises were renewed, in which besides Mr. Poznanski, Mr. Theodore Thomas, Mr. Bergner and Mr. Stein took prominent and efficient part, and a very pleasant evening closed, with many cordial good wishes for the deserved prosperity of the firm of Steck & Company.

A FLATTERING TESTIMONIAL TO THE ARTISTS, I. B. & JOSEPH POZNANSKI.

MAYORALTY OF CHARLESTON,
CITY HALL, June 9, 1866.

MESSRS. I. B. & JOSEPH POZNANSKI, New York:

GENTLEMEN: The following resolutions were adopted by City Council, at their regular meeting on the 10th of April, to wit:

Whereas, Messrs. I. B. and J. Poznanski, influenced by that affection for their native city, which has ever characterized the people of Charleston, have made a donation to be used for the benefit of the poor of the City, therefore, be it

Resolved, 1st. That the thanks of this Council are due to the Messrs. Poznanski for this manifestation of their public spirit.

Resolved, 2d. That the City Council of Charleston recognize with pride and pleasure the musical genius of these distinguished gentlemen, and appreciate their charitable purposes.

Resolved, 3d. That his Honor, the Mayor, be requested to procure and present to Messrs. I. B. and J. Poznanski, in the name of the city, some suitable token of the distinguished consideration in which they are justly held by their fellow-citizens.

In pursuance of the above resolutions it is my agreeable duty to send you the accompanying goblets.

While of themselves of little intrinsic value, they will ever be a memento of the acknowledgment and appreciation by the citizens of your native town, of your noble charity.

In conclusion, allow me to express my personal well wishes for your future success and prosperity.

I am gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

P. O. GAILLARD, Mayor.

Last week these cups, the graceful testimonials from the City of Charleston, to the artists Poznanski, were duly received by these gentlemen. They are simple but massive, and bear the following flattering inscription:—

"Presented by the City Council of Charleston, to — Poznanski, April, 1866, in congratulation on his return to his native city, and in testimony of their appreciation of his brother and himself, in devoting their Concerts to alleviate the wants of their fellow-citizens."

This flattering public testimonial was nobly earned, for there are few artists who would exhibit the unselfish generosity to travel hence to Charleston, S. C., take a company, pay all the expenses, and give the whole receipts of two concerts to charitable purposes. Yet the Poznanskis did all this, realizing a large sum for the poor, and gave no other concert there, which they might have done, on the prestige of their charity. Such acts as these do honor to the man, as well as the artist.

THEODORE THOMAS' GARDEN CONCERTS.—The experiment just made by Mr. Theodore Thomas of a nightly instrumental concert at Terrace Garden, which was generally thought so doubtful, has proved not merely a success, but a triumphant success. The pleasant garden has not only been crowded with visitors, but visitors of the best classes of society. It is a resort to which ladies desire to be taken, for the enjoyment is simple and satisfying—fresh air, green trees, pleasant society, beautiful music finely played, ice creams, sherbet, or anything else that the taste may suggest and the palate relish, are the advantages which